



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
KAGAWARAN NG KAPALIGIRAN AT LIKAS YAMAN



MEMORANDUM

FOR : **The Directors**
Legal Affairs Service
Policy and Planning Service

The Bureau Directors
Biodiversity Management Bureau
Land Management Bureau
Environmental Management Bureau
Forest Management Bureau

The Regional Executive Director
DENR - Region XIII (CARAGA)

The Officer-in-Charge
Mines and Geosciences Bureau

FROM : **The Director**
Legislative Liaison Office

SUBJECT : **INVITATION TO THE 2nd PUBLIC HEARING AND INVESTIGATION IN AID OF LEGISLATION ON SENATE RESOLUTIONS RE: SURIGAO DEL NORTE FROM THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES**

DATE : 03 November 2023

In reference to the email received by our Office on 03 November 2023, the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs joint with the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality of the Senate of the Philippines will conduct its 2nd public hearing and investigation in aid of legislation on **07 November 2023, Tuesday, 09:00 A.M.**, at the **Sen. Ambrosio B. Padilla Room, 2nd Floor, Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City.**, to discuss the following resolutions:

1. **Senate Resolution No. 796** - Inquiry into the Alleged Presence and Operation of a Shabu Laboratory in Surigao Del Norte;
2. **Senate Resolution No. 797**- Systematic Rape, Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, Forced Labor, and Child Marriage in Surigao Del Norte; and

MEMO NO. 2023 - 937

3. Privilege Speech of Sen. Risa Hontiveros Delivered on September 18, 2023

In this regard, may we invite you or your representative to attend the said public hearing and express your views or comments on the said topics, including the issuance of the PAC-BRMA by your Office to the Socorro Bayanihan Services Incorporated.

Kindly inform us of the name/s of the representative/s from your office who will participate in the meeting so we may include him/her/them as resource person/s. Further, kindly submit your comments on or before 06 November 2023 via email at denrilo@denr.gov.ph.

Attached herewith is a copy of the Letter Invitation and the copies of the Senate resolutions may be accessed through this link: <https://tinyurl.com/4tj5uvsj>



ROMIROSE B. PADIN

cc: Undersecretary for Special Concerns and Legislative Affairs



Republic of the Philippines

Senate

Pasay City

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS

October 29, 2023

HON. ANTONIA YULO LOYZAGA

Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

Dear Secretary Yulo Loyzaga:

The Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs joint with the Committee on Women, Children, Family Relations and Gender Equality, will conduct a second public hearing and investigation in aid of legislation to discuss the following resolutions: 1. Inquiry into the Alleged Presence and Operation of a Shabu Laboratory in Surigao Del Norte (SRN 796) and 2. Systematic Rape, Sexual Abuse, Trafficking, Forced Labor, and Child Marriage in Surigao Del Norte (Privilege Speech of Sen. Risa Hontiveros delivered on September 18, 2023 and SRN 797); **on November 7, 2023 (Tuesday), 9:00 a.m.** at the **Sen. Ambrosio B. Padilla Room, 2nd Floor, Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City.**

In this regard, may we invite you and other officers and personnel in the Regional and Municipal levels who are involved or has knowledge or participation in these matters in the said resolutions and privilege speech to attend the said public hearing and express your views or comments on the said topics. Please be informed that said documents can be downloaded from the website www.senate.gov.ph. We are also requesting your written position paper on these matters and send it in advance via e-mail: senatepublicorder@gmail.com and delarosa.legis@gmail.com.

We would also like to reiterate our request to furnish the Committee for a copy of the Protected Area Community-Based Resource Management Agreement (PACBRMA) your Department issued to the Socorro Bayanihan Services Incorporated, as soon as possible. In addition, kindly furnish us also a copy of the PACBRMA of Maharlika Nation, a group also located in Socorro, **including your findings and recommendations.**

Finally, as part of the Senate's health and safety protocols, the following guidelines are implemented for resource persons who will physically attend Committee hearings, meetings, and or investigations:

Amended 10-31-23

1. Names of resource persons must be submitted to the Committee Secretariat (via email at senatepublicorder@gmail.com) at least one (1) day before the hearing/meeting/investigation for proper endorsement of the Senate Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms. Those who are not on the list will be denied entry; and
2. Before entry, resource persons should present to the medical staff on duty at the Senate lobby proof of full vaccination (must have at least completed the primary dose series). Wearing face mask is encouraged.

Your and your Officers' and personnel physical presence and participation this public hearing will be highly appreciated.

Thank you and best regards.

Sincerely yours,

By the Authority of the Chairman:

SEN. RONALD "BATO" M. DELA ROSA

By: *Arthur Lawrence L. Acierto*

ARTHUR LAWRENCE L. ACIERTO (GSC) MNSA, DPA, PhD (h.c.)
Committee Secretary




NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

23 SEP 13 P5:55

SENATE

P.S. RES. No. 796

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by **SENATOR RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA**

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ORDER AND DANGEROUS DRUGS TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO THE ALLEGED PRESENCE AND OPERATION OF A SHABU LABORATORY, HEAVILY-ARMED PRIVATE ARMY OF EXTREMIST GROUPS AT THE HEAVILY-GUARDED SITIO KAPIHAN, BARANGAY SERING, SOCORRO, SURIGAO DEL NORTE WITH THE END IN VIEW OF RECOMMENDING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES THAT WOULD ENSURE THE PROMOTION AND SAFEGUARDING THE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF PERSONS

1 WHEREAS, Section 5 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides under its
2 principles, "The maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and
3 property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by
4 all the people of the blessings of democracy";¹
5

6 WHEREAS, last September 07, 2023, the office of Senator Ronald "Bato" Dela
7 Rosa received a letter containing a resolution from the Mayor of the Municipality of
8 Socorro, Province of Surigao Del Norte requesting an investigation on the alleged
9 operation of Shabu Laboratory and the presence of heavily-armed private army
10 dubbed as "Agila" supported by extremist groups in Southern Mindanao all
11 happening in Sitio Kapihan, Barangay Sering, Socorro, Surigao del Norte;
12

13 WHEREAS, Socorro Bayanihan Services, Inc. (SBSI), is the largest people's
14 organization in the island town of Socorro, Surigao del Norte;
15

16 WHEREAS, it was alleged that due to a Magnitude 5.9 earthquake on
17 February 9, 2019, members of the SBSI abandoned their homes and proceeded to
18 Sitio Kapihan, Barangay Sering, Socorro, Surigao del Norte upon orders of Jay
19 Rence, who the group claimed as God's reincarnation of Senior Sto. Niño (Holy Child
20 Jesus) whom they called "Senior Agila;

¹ <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines/the-1987-constitution-of-the-republic-of-the-philippines-article-ii/>

1
2 WHEREAS, it was further claimed that the SBSI had slowly been transformed
3 into a cultic group and had changed its course from the path of peaceful co-
4 existence with the government, the community and other stakeholders into the path
5 of controversy;

6
7 WHEREAS, the following were allegedly revealed by the eye-witnesses of the
8 Socorro Task Force Kapihan, the task force formed by the LGU of Socorro to address
9 the problems concerning the Kapihan residents:

- 10
11 • Presence of a shabu laboratory at the underground bunker within the
12 vicinity of the white house where the two (2) Kapihan Leaders Karren J.
13 Sanico and Jey Rence B. Quilario are residing;
14
15 • Murder of Mrs. Rosalina L. Taruc, who was the esteemed and virtuous
16 President Socorro Bayanihan Services, Inc. in 2021 and of her daughter
17 former Mayor Denia T, Florano and incoming Bayanihan leader who
18 mysteriously died eight days after the death of her mother;
19
20 • Presence of a heavily-armed private army dubbed as the "Agila" with the
21 arms, ammunitions and uniforms allegedly provided by extremist groups
22 in Southern Mindanao. Moreover, the people in the heavily-guarded Sitio
23 Kapihan were being used as "human shields" by one of the four (4)
24 identified group leaders in the person of Karren J. Sanico;
25
26 • Massive forced marriage at the age of twelve (12) of children-members
27 with the Supreme Leader Jey Rence Quilario allegedly ordering selected
28 girl-brides to sleep with him first for one (1) night before being turned
29 over to the young groom. Moreover, children starting from birth up to
30 their marriage are not allowed to go out of the gated community;
31
32 • Alleged abuses committed by the four (4) identified leaders of the group,
33 especially Janeth T. Ajoc, in collecting fifty per cent (50%) of the wages of their
34 carpenter/mason members, fifty per cent (50%) of the fish catch of their
35 fishermen-members, thirty per cent (30%) share of the proceeds on the sale of
36 the members' real properties, and (50%) of subsidies for 4Ps and Senior
37 Citizens;

38 WHEREAS, based on the 2023 Census of Population of the Socorro Bayanihan
39 Services, Inc. which was prepared and signed by the association's Secretary-
40 General, the total population in Sitio Kapihan is 3,560 and majority of whom are

1 terrorized with the presence of a private army in their community and are being
2 exploited as human shields;

3
4 WHEREAS, there is a need, not only to investigate cult groups that affects the
5 livelihood of innocent communities, but also to look into possible legislative remedies
6 to deter the possible injustice and danger that this may cause for the citizens of
7 Socorro, Surigao del Norte;

8
9 WHEREAS, the Senate must take seriously even the smallest allegation of the
10 existence of private armies as well as that of a shabu laboratory, as these threaten
11 the very foundations of public order on which our communities stand;

12
13 NOW THEREFORE RESOLVED BY THE SENATE, as it is hereby resolved, to
14 direct the Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs to conduct an inquiry, in
15 aid of legislation, into the alleged presence and operation of a shabu laboratory,
16 heavily-armed private army of extremist groups at the heavily-guarded Sitio
17 Kapihan, Barangay Sering, Socorro, Surigao Del Norte, with the end in view of
18 recommending legislative measures that would ensure the promotion and
19 safeguarding the basic human rights and dignity of persons.

Adopted,


RONALD "BATO" DELA ROSA

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Second Regular Session)

23 SEP 18 A11 :25

SENATE

P.S.R. No. 797

RECEIVED BY: 

Introduced by Senator Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros-Baraquel

RESOLUTION

DIRECTING THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS, AND GENDER EQUALITY TO IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO ALLEGATIONS OF SYSTEMATIC RAPE, SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAFFICKING, FORCED LABOR, AND FORCED MARRIAGE OF CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF CULT-LIKE ACTIVITIES AMONG MEMBERS OF THE SOCORRO BAYANIHAN SERVICES, INC. (SBSI) IN SITIO KAPIHAN, SOCORRO, SURIGAO DEL NORTE

WHEREAS, Article XV, Section 3 of the 1987 Constitution, declares that the State shall defend "the right of children to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development";

WHEREAS, Republic Act 11596, otherwise known as the Prohibition of Child Marriage Law, outlaws the practice of child marriage and declares penalties for the facilitation of child marriage and cohabitation of an adult with a child;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 7610, otherwise known as the Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, prohibits and establishes penalties for those who in engage or facilitate child prostitution and sexual abuse;

WHEREAS, Republic Act 9208 as amended, also known as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003, defines the "offer or contract marriage, real or simulated, for the purpose of acquiring, buying, offering, selling, or trading them to engage in prostitution, pornography, sexual exploitation, forced labor or slavery, involuntary servitude or debt bondage" as an act of trafficking;

WHEREAS, the Senate received alarming reports on the alleged rape, sexual abuse, forced labor, and forced marriage of minors in the context of cult-like activities among members of the Socorro Bayanihan Services, Inc. (SBSI), a People's Organization (PO) with 3560 members including 1587 children, based in an enclosed and heavily guarded area in a mountain known as Sitio Kapihan, in Socorro, Surigao del Norte;

WHEREAS, according to the Socorro Task Force – Kapihan, a Task Force formed by the Mayor of Socorro to investigate these allegations at the local level, the SBSI has indicators of a religious cult with one Jey Rence B. Quilaro (aka Senior Agila) as its “Messiah” and leader;

WHEREAS, according to direct and first-hand testimonies, Quilaro would engage in acts of sexual abuse and violence against minors, including ordering girl-children to sleep with him, facilitating child marriages of children as young as twelve (12) years old with adults, locking adolescents in rooms in order for them to engage in sexual activities;

WHEREAS, minor and adult members of the organization were made to perform acts of forced labor under pain of physical punishment, and were also forced to surrender 40-60% of their social welfare benefits (4Ps, senior citizen pensions, etc.) to Quilaro;

WHEREAS, a Senate investigation is needed to immediately address these urgent and alarming issues, rescue the children, effect the reintegration into society of the victims, and identify policy gaps in legislation that allow these cults to operate in plain view of the local government unit and other institutions;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED TO DIRECT THE COMMITTEE ON WOMEN, CHILDREN, FAMILY RELATIONS, AND GENDER EQUALITY TO IMMEDIATELY CONDUCT AN INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, INTO ALLEGATIONS OF SYSTEMATIC RAPE, SEXUAL ABUSE, TRAFFICKING, FORCED LABOR, AND FORCED MARRIAGE OF CHILDREN IN THE CONTEXT OF CULT-LIKE ACTIVITIES AMONG MEMBERS OF THE SOCORRO BAYANIHAN SERVICES, INC. IN SITIO KAPIHAN, SOCORRO, SURIGAO DEL NORTE.

Adopted.


RISA HONTIVEROS
Senator